cipate yearly in the great initiation festival for boys and girls. Consequently as they repeat each year the lessons of their own initiation, the ceremonies are the main vehicle of Yao culture.[1]

There are also two Moslem ceremonies:

(1) *Jando*, the boys' Moslem baptism, which takes about seven days, and is usually worked in with *lupanda*:

(2) *Nsondo*, the girls' Moslem baptism, which is the same as *jando*, but usually quite separate from *cipatu*. It is important that the wife of a Moslem should have her *nsondo* so that she knows how to prepare the food properly at Ramadan.

Menstrual and Other Taboos

Menstruation is held to be dangerous. A special mat is used by the woman during this time, and is rolled up and kept during the rest of the cycle. The hut is completely replastered after menstruation. Intercourse during menses leads to disease of the man. Sexual contact is dangerous to persons at certain other periods: during initiation ceremonies, during mourning, and for babies who have not been through the protective rite. The danger is thought to lie in *ndaka*, a dread disease characterized by swelling. This may be transmitted by salt in the food. Deaths are often attributed to 'salt'. Much of the significance of the mourning is that medicines are prepared which protect the mourners against the dangers attendant on sexual activity.

Burial Rites

News of a death must be sent to the chief by a messenger carrying a single fowl. The chief gives a present of calico for wrapping the body, and a goat for the burial men. These are called *awilo*, neighbours unrelated to the dead, who volunteer for certain duties. They prepare the body for burial and carry it in procession to the graveyard outside the village. No uninitiated person is allowed to see the funeral. All who attend the burial are prohibited from sexual intercourse for one month. After this time the prohibition is lifted by a ceremony of beer drinking and feasting, and on the following day all fires in the village are extinguished, and then relit, and the mourners are shaved. A year later beer is brewed for a final ceremony.

For a period after her husband's death a widow is unclean, and has to be purified by ritual intercourse with a man who is paid. The widow is not allowed to remarry for two or three years. A widower leaves his wife's village, after receiving a parting gift. The widows of ordinary persons are not inherited. If a man has himself a 'name' (rank and social position), he has an heir, who inherits also the wives of his predecessor. But if the heir (the maternal nephew) has married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's daughter) he would not consider the wife's mother as his inherited wife.

Before the burial the dead man's hut used to be destroyed, together with his possessions. Immediately afterwards a consultation is held as to whether retaliatory action against sorcerers is called for. The *awilo*'s duties include not only the conducting of the burial, but also the subsequent inquiry and the conduct of the second ceremony, the beer drinking, at which they shave the mourners. A man who has

[1] Main sources for girls' initiation: Heckel, 1935, p. 19; Stannus, 1, 1910, pp. 184–7; 4, 1922, pp. 269–76; Stannus and Dewey, 1913; Duff, 1903, pp. 312–15; Abdullah, 1919, pp. 16–17; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 125–30; Werner, 1906, pp. 126–7; Johnston, 1897, p. 410.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

came to the village and in accommodating strangers while he was away. He told them that disputes were to be referred to the headman immediately. Turning to the new headman he said he had to report anything unusual that occurred in the village, and that he was authorized to arbitrate in small cases in his and surrounding villages.

Kawinga then left the centre of the crowd and went back to where he had been sitting. Then an officiating headman, addressing particularly the women, said, 'Only a few months ago there was a quarrel between the present chief and his elder sisters. These women ran away to Malemia's area in Zomba district without reporting the matter to anyone. This must stop. With effect from to-day any troubles must be brought to the headman without delay: he will settle them. A tree cannot grow without branches and a headman or a chief cannot be known without his people's respect. Do not behave as children. This man cannot do things alone: he must have your help. We leave him in your hands and we do not want to hear about any more trouble. Follow all the instructions the chief has given you.' He took his leave and Nyenje was taken back inside the hut. The people now dispersed to where there was beer and dancing.

The Structural Reincarnation of Village Headmen and Perpetual Relationships

There appear to be a number of significant aspects of the installation ceremonies. First, there is the ritual death and rebirth of the village headman. The heir is 'killed' by a blow with the fist on the forehead, but is reborn the headman. The Yao do not believe that the spirit of the headman is inherited by the heir;[1] he has only eaten the name.[2] But socially he is born again and, logically consistent with this idea, he takes the wives of his predecessor without further marriage negotiation. He also takes over the property of the dead man, his clothes and his huts.

But this structural reincarnation of the headman has the important implication that the headman is immortal. He shares this characteristic with the group of which he is the leader. When

[1] As the Bemba do. A. I. Richards, 'Mother-right among the Central Bantu' in E. E. Evans-Pritchard and others, *Essays Presented to C. G. Seligman*, Kegan Paul (London, 1933).

[2] *Kulya lina* is a synonym for succeeding to headmanship.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

585 drum of her married life begins. The man and woman live together peaceably enough as
462 a rule, each attending to his own sphere of work. The man builds the house, the woman mucks the floors; she sweeps and cooks, she is the hewer of wood and drawer of water. The man hunts, fishes, makes mats, baskets, the grain store, game traps, and bark-cloth; he looks after the tobacco, and makes the snuff, while his wife brews the beer. He it is who fashions the gourd vessels and carves the spoons, while the woman is the potter (Pl. III, 4) and pipe-maker. Together they hoe and together they harvest, but to the woman falls the monotonous drudgery of pounding and sifting the corn for flour.

842 The Yao have a custom like that of the Anyanja. A sister brings to the house of the
[522] newly wedded pair a log of green wood from a *mbanga* tree which is very hard; the log may be two feet in diameter and four feet long. Should the bride not become pregnant
[558] before it is burned away, the husband is laughed at and they may both be teased by having many logs brought to the house. A man who has no children is much despised and there is a saying, "He must have eaten some ground-nuts," punning on the word for a thick-
[837] skinned variety of ground-nut, *chimbuwila*, a word which also means sterility. An impotent man may, with the consent of his wife, introduce some male friend into the house, any children born in consequence being claimed as the husband's. He usually chooses some friend from a distance to obviate any attachment springing up between him and the wife. Two married couples may, all consenting, exchange consorts for the night, but they never live together like this for long periods.

582 There is one well-defined marriage taboo; a man may not marry a woman of his own
[611] clan. In the old days, he was also restricted to his own tribe, except in the case of slave wives and wives by capture. Since the clan is inherited from the mother,[1] a man may not
[587] marry the daughters of his maternal aunts, but he may marry his other female cousins. He may not marry two sisters nor a deceased wife's sister; neither do two brothers marry two sisters.

595 The number of wives is limited only by the husband's ability to provide for them. In addition to free wives, a man might formerly have a number of slave wives. The head wife is called *kunyelo*, the other wives, *manyumba*. The word given by Macdonald, *akunyelo*,[2] meaning the junior wives, is a Chinyanja word and, I think, wrongly applied.

582 It has been said that a man always marries into the village of his wife. For this reason,
[842] female children are always prized as it means an increase in the number of able-bodied men added to the village. In rare cases, the wife might be taken to the husband's village,
[583] as is the Anyanja practice.[3] This, of course, is true in the case of chiefs and headmen. Here, we may also note that no payment is made for the wife and no dowry is received with her.

584 To revert to betrothal, occasionally the sponsors will not agree to the marriage and a
843 runaway match takes place, but in the end, the marriage is usually regularised by the sponsors coming to an agreement. If, however, the woman has in the meantime become

[1] Vide infra, p. 292. [2] Op. cit., p. 134. [3] Stannus, op. cit., p. 309.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

pregnant, the meeting of the sponsors will have to be postponed until after the ceremony connected with her first quickening with child, *Lilimo*.[1] This ceremony must be performed whether the girl is regularly married or not. One party cannot ask the other for permission that both ceremonies take place at the same time. The answer would be given, "You are asking me to kill two beasts with one bullet." In rare cases, the chief may sanction the marriage and *Lilimo* ceremonies taking place at about the same time, i.e. the marriage is arranged before the child is born.

Widowhood. A widow is considered unclean for a period after the death of her husband. She wears a band of palm-leaf or string around her forehead. When the period is passed and some man wishes to marry her, arrangement is made with some other man to cohabit with her for payment; she is then said to be clean and can go to her prospective husband. This ceremony is called *kutema nyanji*, "to cut the strings," or in Chinyanja, *ku-dula mlazo*, "to cut the palm"; unless it is performed, the new husband will sicken. The man introduced for the purpose is called by the Yao, *kitemi*, the "kyasua," "he who comes by night."

Divorce. From time to time, married people disagree and one deserts the other. If the woman leaves the man, he has a claim against her and the man to whom she goes for all the clothes he has supplied her with during their married life. The husband usually sides with the wife's relatives and arranges that they look after the children; he does not claim them. When the husband and wife mutually wish to separate, they both meet with their sponsors and everything is duly arranged. The husband will give his wife an arrow, saying, "*Mpamba* (the arrow)," meaning, "If I come back, may it kill me." The place of the arrow may be taken by a bullet or any other object, even a piece of grass. The man will add, "*Sasuka, sasuka, no likuwa!* (rattling, rattling, it is a rat!)," inferring that if his wife hears something rattling in the house, it is a rat, not himself trying to come back. There is no definite payment of compensation. If the woman marries again, she presents the "arrow" to her second husband as a sign that she has been freed from her first marriage; without this token, no man would marry her.

Actual adultery was in the old days very rare owing to the strict enforcement of rules, and the case of a woman demanding divorce on account of the adultery of her husband formed a *causa célèbre*. The case heard by the chief would last for days and hundreds of people would come to listen. Neighboring Anyanja pleaders would be invited to speak and great excitement prevailed, as these latter would be accompanied by their villagers, who, to the accompaniment of continuous drumming, would sing, "*Mbawala anakodwa m'ukonde*,[2] (The bush-buck has run his head into the net)," while they ran about running their heads into their game-nets.

Other causes of separation are neglect of duty, sterility of the wife, and habitual death of the children born.

[1] Vide infra, p. 274. [2] Chin.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

them listens to an account of the circumstances attending the illness and death. The point at issue is whether there is any evidence pointing to death from unnatural causes which requires consulting a diviner. The *chief* practically always agrees with the *relatives*, and it is said that he will never press them to go to the *wankisongo* unnecessarily. The case may end with this conference, or here may begin the long series of events described under *unsui*.[1]

During the month subsequent to the funeral, certain taboos have to be observed. The widow may not bathe, and with the exception of the *ewilo*, all who attended must refrain from sexual intercourse. At the expiration of this period, beer is brewed in the village, and all the friends and relatives are again summoned. This beer-drinking is called "the beer of rottenness," or "the beer of resignation." In addition to the beer, food is provided, and everyone helps himself without ceremony. *Chinduindo* is sung and danced and at the present day, bands of trained dancers attend, including *ching'wengeng' wenge*.[2] A pot of beer is sunk into the ground, marking the site of the dead man's house. The night of *mutapeta*[3] sees husbands and wives reunited, and the widow may go through ceremonial intercourse with a man appointed for the purpose called *litewa* or *mbilo*. Sometimes the widow *refuses litewa*, and is given medicine instead to cleanse her; her body is then no longer "hot" and likely to bring disease to those about her. A widow does not marry again for two or three years. A young man who loses his wife has no longer any standing in her village after *mutapeta*. He is usually given a present, with the suggestion that he go elsewhere. After the death of an infant, the mother is considered unclean. She sleeps on a mat apart from her husband till after the ceremony of shaving, and then undergoes a ceremonial coitus with her husband — in which case he is called *litewa* — after which, ordinary cohabitation is resumed. If she has been a widow, or if the child was born "with disease,"[4] another man acts as *litewa*.

The morning following *mutapeta*, all the fires in the village are extinguished. A fresh blaze is then kindled with the fire-drill, *lumanya*, either in the chief's house or in some spot nearby, and from there, fire is carried to all the houses. The ashes of the old fires, the stones supporting the cooking pots, and the porridge sticks are taken to the cross-roads, and there destroyed. Everyone then shaves all his own hair, head, axillae, and pubis. The custom of the second shaving by the *ewilo*, described in *Africana*,[5] is, I think, an adaptation from the Anyanja. A year later, beer is again brewed, and all the relatives summoned to the village to partake of it. There is dancing, but no ceremony.

The Yao bury their dead in regular graveyards in wooded country, the thicker the forest the better, often two or three miles away from a group of villages. Different villages bury their dead in different parts of the burial ground; relatives are usually buried near one another. Graves are never revisited, and no one would enter a graveyard except at the time of a funeral, and then only after obtaining permission from the chief. Such spots are

[1] Vide infra, p. 356.
[2] Beer-drinking.
[3] Mandawaldi, op. cit., p. 111.
[4] Vide infra, p. 370 and n. 1.
[5] Vide infra, p. 356.

6: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

be noted that only 27—11 per cent. of the whole sample of 246 women—had never married and that 23, 80 per cent., of these (or 10 per cent. of the total) were under the age of 20 and therefore stood a good chance of yet marrying. Furthermore, 2 of the 4 women over 20 who had not married were known definitely to be incapable of marrying (one is insane and the other has violent epileptic fits).

There were 33 women who were divorcees or widows (11·3 per cent.), but it should be noted that 27 (or 11 per cent. of the 246 women) were over the age of 45 and therefore were past, or nearly past, the child-bearing period. Those in the younger age-groups stood good chances of remarrying. Table IV shows that though the divorce rate is high[1] remarriage is common. By the time a woman's child-bearing period has ended she has been married on the average 1·7 times. Few marriages are contracted after child-bearing ceases.

TABLE IV. *Marriages and Dissolutions of Marriage experienced by all Women over the Age of 15*

Present age	No. of women	No. of marriages contracted	No. of divorces experienced	No. widowed	No. still married	No. of marriages per woman	No. of divorces per woman	No. of marriages per woman ended by death of husband	No. of marriages per woman still existing
15–20	45	22	1	..	21	0·49	0·02	0·00	0·46
20–30	79	104	36	4	64	1·32	0·45	0·05	0·81
30–45	70	121	30	16	55	1·73	0·71	0·23	0·79
Over 45	52	88	19	34	23	1·70	0·37	0·65	0·48
Total	246	333	116	54	163	1·36	0·47	0·22	0·67

These statistics, showing the early age of marriage, the early commencement of child-bearing, the high incidence of marriage among women, and the high rate of remarriage during the child-bearing period, all point to the high valuation of reproduction reflected in Yao culture. This is consistent with their social structure, where the major corporate groups are kinship groups and reproduction is the principal method of recruitment to the group. Furthermore, because the standard of living is almost at subsistence level, children do not entail the economic losses they do in Western society. On the other hand, they are expected to support their aged parents when they themselves are economically independent. In other words, there are few factors militating against reproduction and many in favour of it.

We may expect the beliefs and customs surrounding child-birth to reflect the value of reproduction. For instance, the Yao distinguish clearly between women who have borne children and those who have not. When a girl becomes pregnant for the first time she undergoes a special ceremony (*litido*) attended only by women who have borne children. This ceremony has many of the features of a *rite de passage* and appears to mark the passing of the woman to a new social status. Furthermore, women are ascribed status according to the number of children they have borne. The word *awuali* signifies a young woman who has not yet borne a child; *awuali*

[1] Between a third and a half of the marriages contracted by women had been dissolved by divorce by the time that the child-bearing period had ended.

11:Sanderson D-5 (ca. 1920) 1920 FT? Yao FT?

G01 G02 G03 know that he is not legally justified in "entering into the name" in truth to do so, as he knows that he is not expected to make a successful chief. The defeat of Sultan, the fifth Makonjila, by the British in 1895 was, and still is, ascribed to the fact that he belonged to the male line.

The term *chipwa* (*mwipwanyao*, "his *chipwa*") may be used for any child of a sister. A female title (common amongst the Yaos) descends to the eldest daughter of the eldest son of the bearer of the title.

G89 G01 G91 *Marriage.*—Relatives who are forbidden to marry are called *mkidanda*; they include all those given in the table except *mdenzi*, *mkiswahdo* ("grandchildren"), and the wife of the maternal uncle. An heir, on succeeding, may marry the wife or wives of his maternal uncle, but not if he has previously married one of his daughters.

It is legal, though rare, for a man to marry the daughter of his own child (*chiswahdo*).

G19 G01 "*Brothers*" *and* "*Sisters.*"—The term *alongo* is used to describe an exogamous clan, and the members are known as *alongo* (singular) *wakalongo* or *da chilongo*, collectively. This word *alongo* is probably a corruption of *wa alongo* ("in the clan") as it requires the use of the term *anjakwe* (*ajao*) "a companion," instead of the possessive pronoun. Thus *alongo anjakwe* (*wakilongo ajao*), "his (their) clan relatives" (instead of *alongo jwakwe*, *wakilongo wao*).

G01 There is no general term corresponding to the English "brother." The nearest is *mdanda*, which describes the relationship between a "brother" and a "sister," it is rarely used by women, however.

The elder "brother" of a man is called *akulu* or *mkimwene*. These terms are used for all sons of a father's elder "brother" or of a mother's elder "sister," and for the elder brother by the same parents. They are also used by a woman for any "brothers," elder or younger, senior or junior, in preference to the term *dandu*.

Mpanyago is used for a son of a father's younger "brother" or of a mother's younger "sister," and for a younger brother by the same parents. It is used by a woman for her "sisters" in exactly the same way, but is never used by a woman of a man.

A man calls his "sister" *chwanali*, collectively, *mwanjawo chwanali*; a girl refers to an elder, or senior "sister," by means of the same term; a man refers to a "sister" as *dandu wango* or *ao chwanali*.

The term *chiswahdo* is used for a "grandchild" (*mwiswahdowango*, "my 'grandchild'").

"*Father*" *and* "*Mother.*"—A paternal aunt is distinguished as *atati mukongwe* ("female father") if necessary, though she is, of course, not addressed as such. The elder brother of a father is referred to as *atati mukulungwa* ("the great father"). his younger brother as *atati wanandi* ("the little father"). Other relatives are similarly distinguished.